

REMARKS

In the Office Action of November 28, 2003, claims 1, 4-9, and 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application No. 6,290,235 to Albertson; and claims 1, 4-9, and 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albertson in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,054,863 to Oliver.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for taking the time to meet with Applicant's representatives in the personal interview of January 6th, 2004. This response is consistent with the issues discussed and agreements reached during the interview.

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 7 to further claim aspects of Applicant's invention. Claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16 remain pending in this application. Applicant notes that while the Office Action indicated that claim 11 was pending, claim 11 has been canceled by the Amendment filed on September 3, 2003. No new matter has been added by this reply.

Applicant respectfully traverses the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 4-9, and 11-16 as being unpatentable over Albertson. No *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established with respect to pending claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16 for at least the reason that Albertson does not teach or suggest every claim element. For example, among other things, Albertson does not teach or suggest a recess having a width larger than a width of the channel, as included in independent claim 1, or a recess having a circular shape with a diameter greater than a width of the channel, as included in independent claim 7.

The Examiner has maintained that Albertson discloses a recess. Specifically, the Examiner has suggested that the end portion of channel (180), as illustrated in Fig. 6 of Albertson, constitutes a recess. However, Albertson does not teach or suggest the end portion of channel (180) having a width larger than a width of the channel, or the end portion of channel (180) having a circular shape with a diameter greater than width of the channel.

Because Albertson fails to teach or suggest a recess having a width larger than a width of the channel or a recess having a circular shape with a diameter greater than a width of the channel, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established with respect to claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16. Accordingly, the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 4-9, and 11-16 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Applicant also respectfully traverses the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16 as being unpatentable over Albertson in view of Oliver. No *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established with respect to claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16 for at least the reason that no combination of Albertson and Oliver teaches or suggests every claim element. For example, Albertson and Oliver, taken either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest a recess having a width larger than a width of the channel, as included in independent claim 1, or a recess having a circular shape with a diameter greater than a width of the channel, as included in independent claim 7.

As noted above, Albertson fails to teach or suggest the end portion of channel (180) having a width larger than a width of the channel, or the end portion of channel (180) having a circular shape with a diameter greater than width of the channel. That is, Oliver, which was cited only for its alleged teaching of a circular recess, fails to remedy

this deficiency. Oliver, like Albertson, also fails to teach or suggest a recess having a width larger than a width of the channel or a recess having a circular shape with a diameter greater than a width of the channel.

Because neither Albertson nor Oliver, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests a recess having a width larger than a width of the channel or a recess having a circular shape with a diameter greater than a width of the channel, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established with respect to claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16. Accordingly, the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 4-9, and 11-16 is improper and should be withdrawn.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicant does not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicant declines to subscribe to any statement or characterization of the Office Action.


In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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